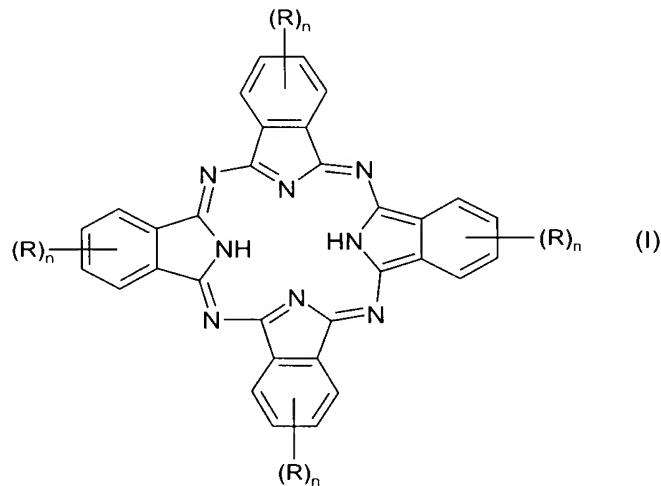


REMARKS

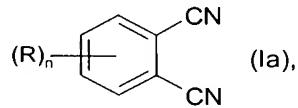
Claims 1-17 remain pending. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The present invention relates to a process for the preparation of a metal-free phthalocyanine of formula I



comprising:

converting an ortho-phthalodinitrile of the formula Ia



to the metal-free phthalocyanine of formula I in an inert solvent with a boiling point of at least 120°C (at standard pressure) in the presence of ammonia and an alkali metal hydroxide,

where

in formula I or Ia, the variable n can adopt values of 1, 2, 3 or 4,

in formula I or Ia, the R radicals denote a five- or six-membered saturated heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen,

the five- or six-membered saturated heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen is bonded via a ring nitrogen atom to the benzene ring,

the five- or six-membered saturated heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen can, optionally, comprise one or two additional nitrogen atoms or an additional oxygen or sulfur atom, and

the five- or six-membered saturated heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen can be, optionally, substituted by one or two C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>8</sub>-alkyl groups.

See Claim 1.

The rejections of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Brach et al. in view of Tamura et al. in view of Paidi and Rintelman are respectfully traversed. The cited references fail to suggest the claimed process.

Brach et al. describe several methods to synthesize metal-free phthalocyanines. One method is “to prepare a labile metallo compound and subsequently remove the metal” (p.140., left col.). This method might correspond to a method which is similar in spirit to the procedure of Tamura et al. Another (unrelated) method involves, according to Brach et al., “heating phthalonitrile, directly, with a tertiary amine at 250°C with ammonia” (p. 1403, left col.). Other methods involve alkanolamines in catalytic amounts or the use of diiminoisoindoline (p. 1403, right col.). The method actually disclosed by Brach et al. involves “heating ortho-dinitriles with substantial amounts of alkyl-alkanolamines” (p. 1404, left col., first paragraph). This is also the method used in the experimental section. Ethanol and water are used for washing the product. No reaction with a dealkalizing agent occurs, since no metal is involved in the experiments of Brach et al. Therefore, no dealkalizing procedure is described in Brach et al. (Applicants assume that the Examiner refers to page

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1405 and not to page 1450 as stated in the office action). Therefore, water and ethanol have a completely different function in the Brach and Tamura references. The arguments of the Examiner therefore have no basis, and would be erroneous and irrelevant in any case, since in the claimed invention no dealkalizing agent is used as already pointed out in our previous replies.

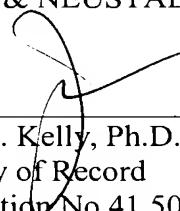
In view of the foregoing, the claimed process is not obvious over the combination of Brach et al. in view of Tamura et al. in view of Paidi and Rintelman. Accordingly, withdrawal of these grounds of rejection is respectfully requested.

Applicants submit that the present application is in condition for allowance. Early notice to this effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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